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LOSS AND GAIN

IN

RECENT THEOLOGY:

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 23, 1881,

IN LITTLE PORTLAND-STREET CHAPEL, LONDON,

TO

Former Students in Manchester New College,

FROM 1840—1880.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU, LL.D., D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,

14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.

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PREFACE.

THE subjoined correspondence will explain the occasion of the following Address, and also its mixed character, in part resembling a College Lecture, and in part a Sermon.

In case these pages should find any outer circle of readers, it may be proper to state that it is usual, at the close of the five or six years' study in Manchester New College, to mark the Student's transition from the Academic to the Pastoral life by a special religious service—of Farewell on the part of the Teachers he leaves; of Welcome on the part of the Ministers he joins; and of self-dedication on his own part. The Valedictory portion of this service devolves on the Principal of the College. And it is in place of the Adieu to the untried preacher that the following reflections were addressed to men approved by long and various experience.

LETTER.

"To the Rev. James Martineau.

"DEAR DR. MARTINEAU,

"At the close of the present Session of Manchester New College there will be no Students who have completed their course, and consequently no Valedictory Address.

"It has occurred to some of us that this will be an opportunity not to be passed by for your old Pupils to gather together on the Thursday evening of Examination-week for a special religious service, and to hear an Address from you. We therefore all earnestly join in this request, that you will consent to speak to us at such a service.

"Scattered as we are in our different posts of ministry, many of us have had but few opportunities of personally renewing our ties with the College which we have never ceased to love. With that College the thought of you is inseparably associated as friend and teacher; and we feel that it would be a source of great delight and refreshment to us all to meet together once more to listen to the voice from which we have learned so much.

"And even should some of us, in the event of your consenting to this request, be debarred from being present, we shall still be glad to have shared in the expression of affectionate regard which prompts it.

"In the arrangements and place of the service we should desire to be guided by your own choice,—whether it should be held privately in the College Library, or whether with an open invitation to all friends in the greater publicity of Little Portland-Street Chapel.

"We are, dear Dr. Martineau,

"Faithfully yours,

(Signed)

Dendy Agate,
W. M. Ainsworth,
R. A. Armstrong,
Charles Beard,
Ambrose N. Blatchford,
William Blazeby,
W. Copeland Bowie,
J. Estlin Carpenter,
Andrew Chalmers,
Hubert Clarke,
Charles C. Coe,
Henry W. Crosskey,
David Davis,
V. D. Davis,
H. Enfield Dowson,
Robert B. Drummond,
James Drummond,
Thomas Dunkerley,
Alx. Gordon,
James Harwood,
P. M. Higginson,
Edward L. Howse,
T. Lloyd Jones,
R. Crompton Jones,
Francis Henry Jones,
J. B. Lloyd,
Rees L. Lloyd,
J. E. Manning,
T. L. Marshall,
William Napier,
C. J. Perry,
Chas. T. Poynting,
John Russell,
Lawrence Scott,
J. D. Hirst Smyth,
H. Shaen Solly,
Frank William Stanley,
S. Alfred Steinthal,
Christopher J. Street,
Charles B. Upton,
Philip Vancesmith,
Douglas Walmsley,
Jas. T. Whitehead,
Philip H. Wicksteed,
Jeffery Worthington.

March 2nd, 1881."

REPLY.

"35, Gordon Square, London, W.C.
March 4, 1881.

"DEAR FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORKERS,

"Your letter and its request deeply move me; and I cannot wait for a second thought before I say how joyfully I shall meet you and speak to you what may be in my heart on the usual evening of the Valedictory Service in June.

"It is one thing to teach the young at College; it is quite another to interpret the lessons of life for those who are in the midst of its conflicts and rich in its experiences. And there are many of you from whom I could now learn more than I have to tell of the duties and wisdom that, in these days, may make the Christian ministry still a beneficent power.

"But if you are not tired of the old voice, speaking in the old spirit, I will not shrink from offering you what may be my last word, though it be only to say how the world looks to one who must shortly leave it.

"I should incline, if agreeable to you, to preserve, as nearly as may be, the customary form of the Valedictory Service. At least it would seem natural to retain its component elements, of Hymn and Prayer and Scripture, as well as Address; and also freely to admit the sympathy of friends, from whom we can have no secrets.

"Meeting thus, we shall have no occasion to make any change in the established place or time; and it will only remain for you to distribute the parts of the service which are not mine.

"Believe me always, dear Friends,

"Yours faithfully and affectionately,

"JAMES MARTINEAU.

"To my former Pupils whose names are appended to the letter of March the 2nd, forwarded by the Rev. Valentine D. Davis."

I cannot refrain from adding, ere I part from this unique occasion, my heartfelt thanks to my old fellow-student and friend, the Rev. William Gaskell, for his supporting participation in it.

How greatly its interest was deepened by his sympathy can hardly be understood except by the few survivors whose College ties have never been weakened for fifty-five years. To both of us, as veterans soon to quit the field, it was a true joy to meet the growing company of well-trained and faithful successors, already armed with better weapons than we shall lay down.

LONDON, *June* 24, 1881.

LOSS AND GAIN IN RECENT THEOLOGY.

DEAR FRIENDS AND YOUNGER BROTHERS,

IN a rash moment crowded with affectionate memories of your College days, I promised to speak to you to-night: as if it were possible for us to cancel the intervening years and meet again as the Students' class around the Professor's chair. Once, no doubt, it was my right and duty to teach you, and offer some guidance to your thought and conscience: and the successive relations thus established during more than four decades of this century form for me golden links of an experience unspeakably precious. But when you come back to me with heads now gray,—nay, father and son together,—pastors of great churches, familiar with public life, and bearing well-earned honours in science or literature, what can I say that you have not thought? whither move, without finding you there before me? from what danger guard you that you have not already shunned? It is but a little truth that one hand can grasp,—perhaps a few seeds that may try their chance to grow. I opened all I had to you: and whether they withered or lived, whether they yielded tares or wheat, you alone can tell, who are in the warm rich summer of life. We freely gave

you our ideas of things human and divine: and now, could I choose, I would fain hear from you the lesson of lessons, viz. how they stand the test of working experience; whether they can look reality in the face and even make it glow "as the face of an angel;" whether they can nerve the tempted will, and sweeten the tried temper, and blend a music with the sorrows of humanity. Instead of this, however, you ask me to tell you how your life-problem looks from the present point of view,—a point of view which is doubly altered; for all of us, through new lights of thought that have fallen upon the scene; and personally for me, as an old man standing on the verge, and having beneath his eye all that he can here expect to see. Is it true, as we are often told, that our prophetic function is gone, and that the Naturalist is henceforth to take our place as well as his own?—that the divine meanings in human things are all a dream, and we really "live by bread alone," and not by mystic words overheard from God?—that the story of our earthly days is a detected failure, a disenchanted romance, instead of a rudimentary eternity? Has anything recently happened to our nature that we must despair of it? or to the Universe, that its only infinitude is that of Space, without the deeps of any spiritual heaven? Guarding ourselves alike against the obstinacy of old illusions and the levity of new, let us measure, if we can, some of the admitted changes of religious conception since the time when we first studied together; and see whether they snatch our commission from us, or leave us still a gospel to preach, a kingdom of God to bring in, an immortal life to expect.

We have no doubt had much to unlearn in our method

of building up and supporting religious faith in others and in ourselves. Instruments of persuasion once ready to our hand have become unavailable. We have overstrained perhaps the search for final causes and made providences out of trifles. Or, we have tried to reach the Creator by dating the beginning of the world; or, to establish a monopoly of Revelation by maligning the great Heathen religions and philosophies; or, to extort a proof of eternal life from the records of Christ's resurrection. In the first humiliation of such mistakes, it is natural to feel helpless and disarmed. But are we then reduced to silence, because we have once spoken foolishly for God? The everlasting realities take no notice of our false logic, but hold their course, to meet us when we no longer mistake their track. How the momentary loss may turn to a permanent gain, may be best seen if we concentrate our attention on one or two leading and recent instances of superseded theological beliefs.

I. Consider, first, the total disappearance, from our branch of the Reformed Churches, of all *External Authority* in matters of Religion. The Catholic prediction, so often made when Luther threw off the restraints of ecclesiastical Tradition, has at last come true; and the yoke of the Bible follows the yoke of the Church. The phrases which we have heard repeated with enthusiasm,—that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants,"—that "Scripture is the Rule of faith and practice,"—are indeed full of historical interest, but for minds at once sincere and exact, have lost their magic power. I need not remind you how innocently, and how inevitably, this has come about; how completely the conception of a *Canonical* lite-

rature that shall for ever serve as a Divine statute-book, belongs to a stage of culture that has passed away; how widely discrepant are the types of doctrine and the conceptions of morals and the recitals of fact, in different parts of this supposed uniform manual; and how, if you disown these human inequalities and insist on artificially filling up its valleys and levelling its hills, you destroy a region glorious in beauty, and doom its running waters to stagnate in unwholesome fens. It is simply *a fact* that *dictated* faith and duty are no longer possible, and that, by way of textual oracle, you can carry to the soul no vision of God, no contrition for sin, no sigh for righteousness. The time is past when a doctrine could save itself from criticism by taking refuge under an apostle's word, or a futurity authenticate itself by a prophet's forecast, or a habit become obligatory by evangelical example.

To our function, as witnesses for divine things, this seems at first a disastrous change, little short of a loss of both the credentials and the instructions which legitimate our message. We naturally think how easy was the preacher's task when he had only to exhibit the sacred seal and make clear the sentences it covered, and the Reason of men would accept them as truth and the Will would bow before them; when doubts of Providence fled from the sufferer at the mere sound of the words, "The hairs of your head are all numbered;" and the shadows of death vanished before the voice, "This mortal must put on immortality;" and the guilty conscience shuddered to hear, "There shall in no wise enter therein anything that is unclean or that maketh abomination and a lie." In our moments of weakness,

when we cry, "Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child!" we may long for some infallible support which may bear our burden and relieve the strain of thought and love. But it is just in order to bear this burden, to sift out the eternally true and good from transient and tempting semblances, and make the divine light glow amid human things, that we have girded up our wills and set apart our lives for spiritual service. And if there were a book-theology ever so perfect, the verbal quintessence of all transcendent truth, the more we spared our own souls and depended upon it, the less should we pierce to the seats of conviction and re-kindle sight for the blind. Religion is not the truth of any stereotyped propositions, but the highest life of the moving spirit; nor can it be conveyed from mind to mind, except by the vibration of harmonic chords. Even the rigid Scripturalists of Puritan times, at the very moment when they seemed to rest everything on the "Word of God," felt how poor a thing was a faith taken upon trust, and dived down with their truth into the deep waters of human experience, and showed its subtle mingling with the whole element of thought and feeling: so that, with all their Biblical securities, their real power lay in the rich stores of their own inward history, their keen insight into the temptations and passions of mankind, and the secret response of conscience to their lofty claims for Holy Living.

Are we then to despair of our office, because what was once used as a Divine Text-book has become a human literature? On the contrary, I claim it as a noble though severe advantage that we are driven from words to realities,

and must sink right home to the inward springs of religion in our nature and experience. The use of knowledge is to take and conform us to the things known; not to look at them, but to live in right relations with them: and we may well bless any change which, withdrawing us from mere reflections of God, centralizes us in God himself; and, silencing formulas of righteousness, makes us organs of its power; and, instead of ideas of immortal life, sets up its very essence and initial stage within us. Will any one tell me that these stupendous spiritual realities can *be*, and leave no marks on the universe they fill?—that it can make no difference to the countenance of nature, whether a Living Mind look through it, or it be as the eyeless mask moulded from a face of the dead?—or, to the aspect of the Moral Law, whether it be the expression of an Infinite Holiness, or only a municipal artifice of human management?—or, to the constitution of our faculties, whether they are on the scale of illimitable growth, or exhaust their possibilities within the term of earthly years? And, if difference it *does* make, thither let us go, and we are in the very audience-chamber,—nay, under the quickening touch, of the Infinite thought and righteousness and love; and, rendered incandescent with them ourselves, shall pass on their fires into other souls. It is the *unwritten* oracles of God that have most deeply stirred the hearts of the devout,—the beauty of the heavens and the earth, the secret heroism of duty, the mystery of sorrow, the solemnity of death; and Scripture itself is only so far the "Word of God," as it truly plants us face to face with these his *silences*. It moves us, because it reads their significance as we read them our-

selves, and would speak to us in vain, were not the same faiths and affections already implicitly there. Just as no critic,—be he even infallible,—can show you the majesty of a statue, the pathos of a poem, the expressiveness of a human face, if you do not intuitively feel it; so can external authority make nothing sacred which does not in itself *find* you and wake up some sleeping piety. Our attitude towards Scripture thus becomes the same which has long been familiar to the Society of Friends; simply assuming that the Spirit of God, which in the old time wrought their elements of sanctity into the pages of the Bible, lives and operates for ever in the human soul, renewing the light of Divine truth, and kindling eternal aspirations: so that the day of Pentecost is never past, and there is still a tongue of fire for every evangelist.

II. And now take the measure of another great change which, though gradual and timid in its advance, has for us reached its completion within our own memory,—the disappearance from our faith of the entire *Messianic mythology.* I speak not merely of the lost "argument from prophecy," now melted away by better understanding of the Hebrew writings, or of the interior relation, under any aspect, of the Old Testament and the New; but of the total discharge, from our religious conceptions, of that central Jewish dream which was always asking, "*Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?*" and of all its stage, its drama and its scenery. It no longer satisfies us to say, that Jesus realized the Divine promise in a sense far transcending the national preconception, and revealed at last the real meaning of the Spirit which spake in Isaiah. Such forced

conforming of the Jewish ideal to the Christian facts, by glorifying the one and theorizing on the other, was inevitable to the first disciples, and could not but colour all that they remembered and thought and wrote: and the imagination of Christendom, working with undiscriminating faith on these mixed materials, has drawn upon its walls a series of sacred pictures, from which Art has loved to reproduce whatever is tender and sublime, and which have broken silence in the Divina Comedia, in the Paradise Lost and Regained, in plaintive Passion-music, and the kindling popular hymn. All this is of intense interest to us as literature, as art, as the past product of devout genius; nor will I too rigorously question those elements of it which fairly admit of symbolic use in setting forth the truths we really mean and the affections we deeply feel. But, as objective reality, as a faithful representation of our invisible and ideal universe, it is gone from us; gone therefore from our interior religion, and become an outside mythology. From the person of Jesus, for instance, everything *official*, attached to him by evangelists or divines, has fallen away: when they put such false robe upon him, they were but leading him to death. The pomp of royal lineage and fulfilled prediction, the prerogatives of King, of Priest, of Judge, the Advent with retinue of angels on the clouds of heaven, are to us mere deforming investitures, misplaced like court-dresses on "the spirits of the just;" and he is simply the Divine flower of humanity, blossoming after ages of spiritual growth,—the realized possibility of life in God. And if he is *this*, he has no consciously exceptional part to play, but only to *be* what he is, to follow the momen-

tary love, to do and say what the hour may bring, to be quiet under the sorrows which pity and purity incur, and die away in the prayer of inextinguishable trust. And, to see him thus, we go to his native fields and the village homes of Galilee, and the roads of Samaria, and the streets and courts of Jerusalem, where the griefs and wrongs of his time bruised him and brought out the sublime fragrance of his spirit. All that has been added to that real historic scene,—the angels that hang around his birth, and the fiend that tempts his youth; the dignities that await his future,—the throne, the trumpet, the great assize, the bar of judgment; with all the apocalyptic splendours and terrors that ensue, Hades and the Crystal sea, Paradise and the Infernal gulf; nay, the very boundary-walls of the kosmic panorama that contains these things,—have for us utterly melted away, and left us amid the infinite space and silent stars. What painter among us dare now to put upon his canvas the scene in which "before him are gathered all nations?" or, like the old masters, represent "the dead in Christ who rise first"? Such pictorial subjects occupy indeed a curious position; too far from our serious belief to be treated earnestly; too near to it to be delivered over to the play of artistic fancy, like the incidents of the classical Olympus.

Where then do we stand, on the dissolution of these scenic dreams? Is their fading away a mere loss, abandoning us to a desolate negation? When you think most reverently of Christ, when you most lose yourself in God, when you are clearest in immortal hope, do you wish them back again? Would they overfill, or would they disappoint, the measures of your spirit in such hours? May we not

say that the more the Divine life awakes within us, the less do we ask, and the less can we bear, that its infinite objects and elements should be rendered finite by being brought into the plane of Perception? It is only in the rudimentary stages of piety that men crave tangible objects or feigned pictures on which to fasten their wonder and veneration. The perennial fountains of Religion lie in the deepest wells of our nature, in the primary essence of the Reason and the Moral consciousness: but, to suit the ease of "the natural man," there is a constant tendency in more superficial faculties to take possession of it as it rises and treat it as their own. Imagination is delighted with it, mistakes its character, and plays with it perilous experiments of colour and of form; which at last tempt the Senses themselves to claim it and set it fast in some "graven image which shall not be moved." Invert this order of degeneracy, and you recover the purity and reality of faith. Iconoclasm has already dispossessed the Senses: the perishing of Mythology is fast bringing Imagination to repentance and inducing it to lower its sceptre; and we reach the ultimate simplicity of Christ,—"the Spirit which beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Is, then, the power of things invisible destroyed, when they can no longer be treated as if visible? Do we not "walk by *Faith* and not by *Sight*"? And is not Imagination essentially "Sight,"—mere vision with shut eyes? It can never supply anything to Faith except a perishable drapery: and if we are to have a religion which "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt," we must "lay up our treasure

in the heaven" of *the spirit*, not in earthly folds, however graceful, of the sensuous fancy. There is something suicidal in the scene-painting of apocalyptic belief. It is the effort of men's lower mind to draw down objects infinite and eternal within the grasp of their representative faculty, the rebellion of Wonder against its own baffling limits, its resolve to *force* an answer to its own questions, a relief to its own amazement and suspense. The resolve fulfils its own aim: the answer is *self-created:* the relief is gained: the blank is filled: the required scenery appears and settles into determinate forms: and then the Wonder sinks away, and with it the Religion dies. When we are called of God to plunge and float in His illimitable sea, what can be more miserable than forthwith to escape and land on some broken spar of mythology or dogma?

The devout trusts and habits of the soul in which the pure religious life consists are conscious of their own conditions, and ask no help from sense or fancy. "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed;" who, knowing that "spiritual things are spiritually discerned," pine for no brilliant phantasms, but can "pour forth their song in the night," and to whose thought and love, just as to God himself, "the darkness shineth as the light." What is Divine in the world and in ourselves is precisely what lives behind and within all appearances; and the assurance of it becomes intense in proportion as outward conditions dissolve like shadows before us, and leave us alone at the inner focus of reality. It is with closed eyes that we best commune with the Father of spirits, and "enter the secret place of the Most High." None the less solemnly does

Conscience make us "sure that our sin will find us out," because we have no vision of the hour and the scene of our inevitable shame. And when Death snatches from our side the attendant angels of our life, guides and companions of our way, with their wisdom not half exhausted and the wonders of their love only just begun, are we not as certain that they are made for more than these fragmentary years, as if the landscape were before us of the everlasting hills? For my part, I put no faith in scenic religion, and look upon the modern ritualistic return to it as an unfailing mark of inward decay. It is a puerility, or a mockery, to offer it as help in temptation or peace in sorrow. If the immediate pleading of God in our conscience is of no avail, the visionary fires of future torment will glare upon us in vain. And as for our dear departed ones, if we cannot surrender them to the environing infinitude as to the protecting arms of God, it will hardly be more congenial to let them go into any pearl-gated City of the Redeemed. The closer we keep to the simplicity of human life, the meanings of human experience, the depth of human duty and affections, the nearer shall we stand to God as well as man, and the less, from our station on earth, feel ourselves cut off from heaven. In youth, if ever we receive a "*Serious Call*," it is *the most elementary* religious truths by which the mind becomes entranced. Who can ever forget the intense and lofty years when first the real communion of the Living God,—the same God that received the cries of Gethsemane and Calvary,—and the Sanctity of the inward Law, and the sublime contents of life on both sides of death, broke in a flood of glory upon his mind, and spread the world before

him, stripped of his surface-illusions and with its diviner essence cleared? The restless intellect of mid-life may toss these things about in speculation, may add to them or take from them, or weave them into the artificial texture of a system. But in old age, as the end draws near, we repose again on these simple truths and trusts, only with a fuller inward witness and more spiritual calm. And so, the evening light is as the morning's, and sheds once more the tenderest beauty on the world.

Are we then to warn off Imagination from the sacred precincts and, on account of its illusions, allow it *no* entrance into the religious life? This would indeed be absurd: as well might we propose to dispense with eye-sight, because the blind can have no falsely-coloured dreams. It is precisely in the sphere of religion that imagination, everywhere essential alike to intellect and to affection, exercises its most glorious rights. But, in order to guard these rights, we must define their limits,—perhaps thus: the function of imagination is to decipher *the real though invisible,* and not to set up *the unreal by exhibiting it as visible.* It finds for us all the hidden truth of which the physical world supplies only the *symbols* to the eye,—the power behind all phenomena, the meaning of every expressive face, the feeling within every tone, the secret spring of every character. It reproduces for us the figures of the past, the theatre of their history, and the passions that moved them across the stage. It is the fountain of sympathy, by carrying us to the heart of joys and sorrows other than our own; and of hope, by showing lights of possibility beyond the darkness of the actual. And according as the

Gospels are interpreted without or with its aid, the person of "the Son of Man" emerges as that of a Jewish compound of enthusiast and charlatan, or as the Head of a divine humanity. In the support which it affords to spiritual apprehension, it reads the finite into the infinite; its action is expansive; and its result, an ascent into immeasurable truth. But in the invention of a mythology it reads the infinite into the finite; its action is contractile; and its result, a descent into puerile fable.

But I must hasten to my last word. I have spoken of changes of thought since first we studied together: what is the sum of them? That they discharge the ingenuities of schoolmen and dreamers, and re-deliver us to the intuitions and pieties of our nature; by his identification with which it is that Christ wins us as his disciples and makes us one with himself and God. Herein lies the security and, under faithful administration, the intrinsic nobleness of your function, which is nothing else than to represent and work out this inward, spiritual, divine and perfectible side of human life, and uphold its authority over all that is merely outward, temporal and animal. Religion is reproached with not being *progressive:* it makes amends by being *imperishable.* The enduring element in our humanity is not in the doctrines which we consciously elaborate, but in the faiths which unconsciously dispose of us, and never slumber but to wake again. What treatise on sin, what philosophy of retribution, is as fresh as the fifty-first Psalm? What scientific theory has lasted like the Lord's Prayer? If it is an evidence of *movement* that, in a library, no books become sooner obsolete than books of science, it is no less

a mark of *stability* that poetry and religious literature survive, and even ultimate philosophies seldom die but to rise again. These, and with them the kindred services of devotion, are the expression of aspirations and faiths which for ever cry out for interpreters and guides. And in proportion as you carry your appeal to these deepest seats of our nature, you not only reach the firmest ground, but also touch accordant notes in every heart; so that the response turns out a harmony. Say what we may about the dissensions of Christendom, I yet affirm that Religion in its very essence, and the religion of Christ in the most absolute degree, is a bond of human union tenacious in itself, and increasing the tenacity of every other. It is always the self-assertion of intellect and will that divides us: it is the self-forgetfulness of love and reverence that unites us: and never can we *so* pass out of our own hands as when we lose ourselves in God: to be one with Him is to be one with each other. There are two sides to human life; one, towards the kingdom of nature; the other, towards the kingdom of God. To the former belong all the secular competitions, the strife of opinion, the self-regarding efforts, the passions of party, the conflicts of war, which keep the world in a ferment of ambitions, and make it the prize of victorious capacity. To the latter belong all the blending affections, the common admirations, the subduing pieties, the enthusiasms for the true, the just, the holy, by which life is sweetened and purified, and healing brought to its sorrows and peace to its storms. In the rivalry between the two, rude voices proclaim the triumph of the *energies;* but Christ steps forth and pronounces the *beatitudes.* That

winning voice has brought you to his side. You have accepted from him a function which is *not pre-occupied* by the eager partizans of separate interest or opinion, *not* superseded by the journal or the platform; viz. to become the organ of faith deeper than opinion, of hope that is never clouded, of charity that conquers ill; to intensify the hunger and thirst after righteousness; to open the dull eye of the spirit to the beauty and graces hid beneath the plain face of life; and reverently watch over that purity of heart which alone can see God. In this service of Divine ends, be not dismayed by the seeming scorn of heedless men: could you look behind that screen, you would find that in their remoter soul you have an eternal Advocate, "the spirit of truth that cometh from the Father." Whoever will deal with realities must often disbelieve appearances: else how should he ever suspect that, beneath the driving waves and angry surge of human passions, the same waters, through miles of depth, lie tranquil in their bed? The harmonizing element in the soul is infinitely vaster and more enduring than the discordant: only it remains latent till you absolutely believe in it and live in it. But you will soon meet it and learn to trust it, when once you dare to speak to what is least visible in human character, yet most surely witnessed in your heart of hearts.

Dear Friends and Brothers, if it is well, in this work of ours, to begin with the Heathen idea of perfection and *know ourselves*, it is indispensable to go on to the Christian and *forget ourselves*. Here lies the secret of spiritual power. Our own brief experience, as well as all Christian history, attests this. When I look back over the two generations

that are clear to me in memory or in record, and, among the inevitable varieties of worth, notice the figures and features that survive in thought, the differences are full of pathetic lights and shades. The vain and empty are simply gone without a trace, their egoism melted into nothingness. The hard and opinionative are remembered indeed, and with homage to their integrity; but remembered with a smile, as belonging to the past; or, if more, only on account of some redeeming enthusiasm or tenderness which hinted a suppressed fire within. But the forms that are still radiant, the eyes that have not lost their glow and are still as if near to us in the distant air, are those of loving and trustful disciples, surrendered to faithful service, and spending in it, with childlike simplicity, the gifts of genius or the affluence of culture. Your own hearts will testify that it is no mere personal accident if Channing, inspirer of my youth, and John James Tayler, the friend of my full age, live before me among the dearest and most sacred figures of my past, and of my future. It is their purity of soul, their constancy in duty, their tenderness of affection, their life in God, that joins them to the train of Christ, and mingles them with the lengthening procession of the saints. Their work is in your hands: may the grace and power of their spirit be continued in your hearts!

Prayer.

God of our life! who abidest for ever, but appointest the ages to carry us away as with a flood! we would pass into thy hand and rest in thee. Our wishes are blind: thy wisdom is infinite: we trust thy mercy alike, whether thou make our time short, or allot to us length of days. Our only prayer shall be that, morning or evening, in the light or in the shadows, we may be moulded to thy perfect will.

O Spirit of grace, whose witness appeareth in the lives of the righteous, and is hid in the secret places of all hearts! clear our vision to read it truly, and waken our courage to declare it faithfully. Rising above all proud thoughts and selfish aims and unloving temper, may we dedicate ourselves to thee in the meekness and simplicity of Christ. Sanctify every soul that seeks thee here; and send us to our remaining work with chastened desires, with truer diligence, and more devoted fidelity. Living or dying, here or there, still join us in love to each other and to thee. Amen.

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